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KRASNER WAS NEVER A PRISON ABOLITIONIST

When progressive District Attorney Larry Krasner was elected, he celebrated with his supporters and campaign team. Among his team were many self-styled prison abolitionists. As the politician and his entourage were reveling the night away, some supporters began shouting anti-police slogans. These chants were quickly shushed and discouraged from continuing. This suppression of anti-system sentiment seems to have been a sign of things to come with regards to Krasner's position regarding the case of Mumia Abu Jamal.

It seems that Krasner is only willing to go so far. In a recent brief filled by Krasner's office, it is made clear that using his position of power to facilitate freeing Mumia Abu Jamal was out of the question. Abu Jamal is convicted of murdering a Philly police officer in 1981, and has been struggling to be released.

Some of Krasner's supporters have framed his election as part of a "prison abolitionist" strategy, but his actions seemed to have left them disappointed. Krasner complained that rejecting Abu Jamal's appeal is "nuanced" and "affects many other cases". Despite handing Abu Jamal's defense six boxes of evidence that were not made available during the initial trials, the DA refused to let the appeal be filed.

In many ways Krasner is correct to state that the appeal can affect other cases. If one person who is not only accused but

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CHECKING IN ON AMAZON

We live in an increasingly monitored society, whose authority figures seek to increase control over the populace and prevent any semblance of authentic freedom. Even if Amazon was prevented from establishing its secondary headquarters here in Philadelphia, it continues to be at the forefront of those imposing those monitors on us. Their AWS cloud computing services are involved in everything from agriculture to intelligence agencies, their order and delivery services have changed the very landscape around us, and their Ring brand doorbells (and other devices) have become increasingly threatening to any sense of privacy.

The news that Amazon decided against establishing its HQ2 in Queens, NY, due to resistance from unions and the community, was widely celebrated by anarchists and the left. Such a development suggests that the informal campaign against Amazon last year in Philadelphia that seemed to result in vandalisms, theft of various Amazon products (including the Ring doorbells), sabotage of Amazon lockers, and even the arson of a truck belonging to Amazon, was influential in preventing Amazon from picking Philadelphia for the same purpose. But that doesn't mean their influence has not continued to grow here and elsewhere.

For some time, there has been an increasing number of Amazon warehouses around city centers, with Philly as no exception. Their proliferation of distribution centers and loc-

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WHAT WENT DOWN

January 3 - Philly cop hit by car while on motorcycle sustains severe head injury. Motorist says they did not see him.

January 9 - Young adult wanted in Wilmington for felony probation violations flees police, leading them to crash on I-95 near the Philadelphia Airport, and escapes into South Philly. Two of the five cops injured in the chase were hospitalized after their car flipped. The young person previously escaped custody on a different occasion by kicking out the rear window of a vehicle he was held in.

January 14 - Second trial group of Vaughn 17 prison rebels begins in Wilmington, DE. Kevin Berry, Abednego Baynes, John Bramble, and Obadiah Miller are charged with assaulting officers, one of whom died, in the course of the takeover of C-Building at James T. Vaughn Correction Center in February 2017.

January 15 - A small riot breaks out in Suburban Station as SEPTA police force out the homeless in 26 degree weather. Officers are assaulted and a door's glass is broken. Police used batons and pepper spray to subdue the crowd.

Late January - Bus stop advertisements tagged with anarchist and anti-civilization graffiti.

February 18 - Second Vaughn 17 trial's jury delivers no convictions on all four defendants.

Late February - A large bit of graffiti seen in Rittenhouse, nearly as wide as the building is long on which it appeared, which reads: "Act For Freedom (A) Destroy Borders (/)"

February 20 - Flash demonstration against ICE, nations, and borders manifests in the streets outside the ICE offices on 8th Street in Chinatown before 9am.

February 21 - An activist is arrested during the Black and Brown Workers Cooperative's disruption of a City Council meeting, protesting councilmanic prerogative and council-people like Jannie Blackwell for their role in gentrifying the neighborhoods they represent. ★

POLICING UPDATE

In nearby Wilmington, DE, police officer Thomas Oliver Jr is facing charges for raping a woman in his patrol car while on duty in October of last year. Oliver coerced the woman, telling her that he would arrest her for a warrant if she did not have sex with him.

In the opposite direction, in Camden, NJ, Camden County police killed a 17-year-old girl on February 13th. An officer driving a police cruiser struck the girl around 10PM in East Camden, killing her. The police have not released information about the officer at the time of this writing.

Philadelphia police have been causing their share of distress as well. On February 10th, two cops crashed into and injured a motorist in Kensington. The motorist is in the hospital in unknown condition. A video dated February 6th has been going viral on social media. The video shows a police officer grabbing a handcuffed woman by the hair, kicking her legs out, and knocking her to the ground. Former PPD homicide detective Philip Nordo was arrested for raping and intimidating witnesses as well as sending them money to keep quiet during his 20-year career as a cop. The revelation of his predatory and coercive behavior has thrown many cases he was involved in into question. Unsurprisingly, witnesses' complaints about the assaults did not lead to anything while Nordo was still a police officer. Nordo was eventually fired in 2017, but only after a defense attorney found that he had been improperly placing money in an imprisoned witness's account.

SEPTA police have shown a particular cruelty lately toward the homeless and disabled in two recent incidents at Suburban Station. On January 15th, a small riot erupted as SEPTA police were forcing homeless people out of the station during sub-zero weather. Officers were attacked, and used pepper spray and batons against the homeless. In a different incident, a SEPTA policeman can be seen in a facebook video insulting and dragging around a disabled man in a wheelchair on February 12th. The nurse who took the video confronts the officer, asking him why he is treating the man poorly, only to be insulted by the police officer and told to leave the station. ★



NEITHER GOD NOR MASTER

A Northeast Philadelphia priest named Reverend Steven J. Marinucci was placed on administrative leave in late January, following an allegation of sexual abuse, according to a statement by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Three weeks earlier, the Philadelphia Archdiocese announced that two area priests had been found “not suitable for ministry” following an investigation by church officials of sexual-abuse allegations against them in the early 1980s. The Rev. John F. Meyers had most recently served as interim rector at Malvern Retreat House. The Rev. Raymond W. Smart is retired and has been on leave because of failing health since 1995.

Another local priest, Msgr. Joseph L. Logrip had been placed on administrative leave after a sexual-abuse allegation was made against him for conduct in the early 1980s, the archdiocese also announced at the time. Logrip earlier had been cleared of similar allegations that surfaced after a 2011 grand jury report. Former Montgomery County pastor Jerry Zweitzig was charged at the beginning of January with 200 counts of possessing child pornography as well as multiple counts of indecent assault.

In August, Roman Catholic leaders in Pennsylvania were revealed to have covered up decades of child sex abuse involving more than 1,000 victims and hundreds of priests, in a new grand jury report.

Meanwhile, Pope Francis publicly admitted this month that priests have used nuns as “sexual slaves” – and are probably still doing so – while the church continues to contend with a wave of cases involving pedophile priests in countries worldwide, from Ireland and the United States to Australia.

The wanton malfeasance of the Catholic Church proliferates like a plague, even in this period of relative unpopularity.

We seem to live in a largely secular society – but missionaries still exist, furthering genocide and/or subjugation to a world of industrialism and forced labor. A strict judeo-christian morality is still imposed by that larger society. Even the radical Christians speak positively of following Jesus, implying that leadership and worship of an overlord are still worthwhile. Hell, even mutual aid initiatives by anarchists are assumed to be Christian charity from the outset by every beneficiary polled, if they’re not told otherwise.

The name of this paper has created curiosity on many an occasion, and perhaps serves as a basis for the anti-religious position that is to follow. The word “anathema” – originally chosen for its use in a sarcastic portion of Bonanno’s “Armed Joy” that imagines the decries of the reformist reaction to anarchist action, among other reasons – happily finds its linguistic origin in 16th century ecclesiastical Latin for “an accursed thing” or “an excommunicated person,” and, later, a “thing devoted to evil.”

Many an anarchist newspaper at the turn of the 20th centu-

ry found common cause with this sentiment, using terms like “Light Bearer” (another name for Lucifer) as their titles as well as symbols like torches to convey the same. Some of this carried with it not just anti-Christian sentiment, but also the connotations of enlightenment thinking, and thus science.

Many of us have since recognized science as a new manifestation of religion to be avoided. Most of the important aspects of scientific “reason” and methodology – the ones that turn-of-the-century anarchists likely appreciated – in fact precede the founding of science as an authoritarian tool. Witches, midwives, and nurses practiced medicine, for example, before doctors began to stumble about, reinventing the wheel and depriving countless people of their autonomy.

Formalized religion and medical science both appropriated positions from earlier, more egalitarian practitioners – and undermined the self-determination of bodies that were not straight, white, and male, in the process. Yet, ironically, some continue to advocate for one liberating us from the other.

More recently, there has been a reinvestment by some anarchists in spirituality, especially among those who recognize humans as only one part of the natural world, a world that has long been othered and marginalized. To deny god(s) among some of these folks is offensive, while others recognize the gods as only playful fables – manifested only to remember our place in a much larger web of living things, as well as to entertain. Others may recognize that there can be spirituality without needing to create gods – and it is among those that we revisit the old anarchist phrase (perhaps first uttered by an atheist priest in 18th Century France), “Neither god, nor master.”

This denial of any authority over us is at the basis of the earliest anarchist ideas, and, despite the limitations of decontextualized rhetoric, this phrase still serves as an anchor among waves of mediocre mentalities – so long as it does not become a dogma itself.

Here we revisit it specifically to remember when assaults on churches and their henchman have been a means to liberation all over the world – from basking in a familiar glow emanated from many a burning church throughout the earliest colonizations, to the more recent assassinations of merciless missionaries by the uncontacted tribes that they pursued. “The only church that illuminates is a burning church,” said famed Spanish anarchist Buenaventura Durruti. In fact, in the last year there have been incendiary attacks against churches attributed to anarchists in Italy, France, Chile and Uruguay. In January 2018, there were 5 separate attacks in Chile alone, preceding a visit from the Pope.

In the U.S., assaults on churches have a more complex context, since attacking Black churches has long been a strategy of white supremacists to undermine the historically already highly restricted means of Black folks to gather together. But many radicals’ attempts to rightly disassociate themselves from this white supremacist tactic have led to being overly apologetic for the church, ignoring some of the ways in which it has furthered white supremacy and colonization all over the world. Church-

es have consistently inhibited freedom wherever they are, and have played a crucial role in normalizing authoritarian social and political roles on this continent.

In this light, the New Sanctuary Movement here and liberation theology elsewhere are nothing more than attempts to reform inherently oppressive institutions that do not seek to dissolve the source of the problems they fight (i.e. the state). We may find accomplices for criminal acts of resistance that in those religious movements that, again, deprioritizes the crumbling of their edifices – but we should also remember that these structures only became the gathering places they are today by erasing the commons in which people previously gathered in, through domestication and capitalist privatization. That erasure made it more difficult to survive without turning to the church's (or some other) authority. In fact, relying on churches to house people outside of the law further disempowers all but the institution – look to the refugee squats of Greece for inspiration if you care for an empowering humanist alternative.

Religion might not directly impact quite as many people as mass commercialization in the digital age, but neither is the Catholic Church some low-hanging fruit with which an open conflict would be disadvantageous. It has the largest denomination of any church in this country – more than 68 million adherents, according to a 2012 review.

Add to the Catholic Church's abuses the database of more than 200 sexual abuse offenders and 700 victims within the Southern Baptist Church. The database was recently compiled after decades of their leaders refusing demands to create such a list themselves, and actively keeping such details about their leaders from their congregations and the larger public. Southern Baptist is the second largest faith group after the Catholic Church, and has over 200 churches in the Philadelphia area, so there really is no shortage of targets. Meanwhile, the overtly oppressive Mormon Church has opened a new location in the middle of Philadelphia in order to further propagate its message.

Above all, religion exists as an attack upon passion and therefore an attack upon life. The morality it imposes is a governance that requires its adherents to actively repress their passions (as some odd act of devotion to a god that granted them free will). Because they (or when they fail to) repress their urges, religion's devotees can become monstrous – that is, their repressed urges are most often taken out on those they have power over so that they may still contain or control the narrative. Both the Church and the state have failed to address this particular plague, and any further attempts would be nothing more than a reform of the very institution that remains the problem.



“From time to time they exchanged remarks on other subjects, and cast a furtive glance at the dying man. The rattling in his throat grew more and more painful. At last, with a trembling hand, he felt the cross on his breast and endeavoured to tear it off; it was also weighing upon him, suffocating him. It was taken off. Ten minutes afterwards, he died.” – Dostoevsky ★

WHETHER GUILTY OR INNOCENT: THE VAUGHN 17

After a grueling five weeks, the second trial of the Vaughn 17 ended in mid-February with no convictions for any of the latest four defendants. All four defendants – Abednego Baynes, Kevin Berry, John Bramble, and Obadiah Miller – were accused of assaulting and taking correctional officers hostage as part of the takeover of their building at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center in Smyrna, Delaware in February 2017.

Citing worsening prison conditions and President Trump's election, prisoners took control of their building at Vaughn for over 18 hours. One correctional officer bled to death during the occupation, and sixteen prisoners were later indicted for his murder. Eighteen prisoners altogether were charged with assault, kidnapping, riot and conspiracy charges. One prisoner, Royal “Diamond” Downs, secretly cooperated with the investigation, pled guilty to riot, and is now the state's star witness. Another prisoner, Kelly Gibbs, killed himself after taking a non-cooperating plea during the first trial.

The verdict is a major loss for the state, which has already gone hundreds of thousands of dollars over budget on this high-priority case and has now failed to produce more than one murder conviction so far. The sweeping indictment of eighteen prisoners in this case was presumably intended to cover up the state's own culpability for the takeover – prison officials had refused to deal with the abusive conditions that led to the uprising in the first place, the police investigation after the fact was embarrassingly sloppy, and the state's decision to wait almost 20 hours to end the takeover directly led to Sergeant Steven Floyd's death.

In retaliation for the uprising, the state has also quietly terrorized and abused the indicted former Vaughn prisoners for the past two years since the takeover. Defendants taking the stand during this trial were able to testify about the “full-on assault” leveled at prisoners immediately after the uprising, as well as the extremely repressive conditions they've endured since then.

Whether they are found guilty or innocent, all sixteen defendants still caught up in this case deserve support – and so does the uprising itself. Despite being under intense pressure, all of the defendants have refused to cooperate with the police. They have insisted on taking their case to court in order to further expose the abuses of the prison system and, in most cases, to maintain and defend their innocence.

This strategy is now paying off. Because the defendants chose to stay in solidarity with one another against the state, the prosecution was forced to take their embarrassing case against them to trial. According to the defendants, the state never expected to have to actually have to prove their case in court – in previous sweeping indictments that the lead prosecutor and judge assigned to this case have worked on together, almost everyone who was indicted folded on each

other and took pleas. In this case, defendants stood by their principles and called the prosecution's bluff.

In the previous trial, the prosecution succeeded in gaining partial convictions for two of the defendants only because those two — Jarreau Ayers and Dwayne Staats — attested to their participation in the takeover. Staats testified that he had sought to plan the uprising with six fellow “lifers” — inmates who would have nothing to lose. According to Staats, the plan was for two prisoners to subdue each of the three correctional officers, while he took care of the prison counselor.

During that same trial, Ayers testified that he had not been told about the plan in advance, but that he'd stepped up to help out once it was in motion. Ayers helped with the hostage negotiations and checked on prisoners who had medical issues. Both Ayers and Staats risked additional repression by returning to the stand during the second trial to exonerate the defendants, as well as expand on their prior accounts of what happened.

In the second trial, left with only contradictory snitch testimony and one questionable DNA sample, the prosecution was unable to convince the jury beyond a reasonable doubt that any of the defendants were involved in the uprising. The jury returned not guilty verdicts on 35 of the 40 counts against the four defendants, and returned “no decision” verdicts on the remaining five counts. These included riot and murder of a law enforcement officer for Obadiah Miller, and riot and assault of an officer for John Bramble. Abednego Baynes and Kevin Berry were cleared of all charges.

Many of the defendants' supporters have highlighted the defendants' innocence and the oppression they've endured as reasons they deserve support, despite the “tragedy” of someone's death in the course of the uprising. We do not think it's tragic that a law enforcement officer died. We respect the immense courage and commitment it must have taken for any prisoner to participate in the takeover and risk their lives for freedom. Correctional officers keep prisoners captive and stand in the way of their freedom — that is their job. Moving towards liberation means preparing yourself to fight those who insist on standing in your way.

The fact that some people were prepared to fight and went through with it should inspire the rest of us to be more real about what liberation will take. The Vaughn prison takeover is one of the most important insurgencies so far this century, in an era in which the extreme risks of repression have deterred more and more people from rebellion. ★



Vaughn 17 Support Graffiti along Interstate 95

“I speak of all this because this is what I see going on. How many real and good dudes do you know who are on lockdown because a rat decided to do the white man's job for him? We are putting each other in here — and we keep killing each other — for what? To all the brothers reading this, we must stop oppressing each other to appease the white man. These plantations wouldn't be so full of us if we stopped putting each other here, and if we would let the police do their job themselves without any help. Think: would you be where you are at if it wasn't for a rat? No, right? A lot of good dudes wouldn't.”

— Kevin Berry, LIVE FROM THE TRENCHES:
THE VAUGHN 17 SPEAK

WHO DO YOU PROTECT?

The story here actually starts more than two years ago, just days before the last presidential election. What the story recalls is something pretty basic about the relationship between the cops and Nazis, but there is a habit of forgetting it in mobilizations against fascist demos. Sometimes it takes a few years for a tendency to emerge, for (good and bad) habits to form, and problems to become clear. I will address a recurring problem that has been crystallizing: sometimes we lose sight of the cops right in front of us, while chasing after fascists in the distance.

A chant can sometimes be a warning sign. Chants at demos are usually ambiguous or forgettable, but once in a while they stick out. At the antifascist demonstration against the National Socialist Movement (NSM) rally in Harrisburg in November 2016, people began chanting at the police: “Who do you serve? Who do you protect?” The chant was new and bizarre to me, but obviously habitual to the demonstrators chanting it. Like many chants (for example, “no justice no peace”), it can be interpreted two different ways: an appeal to some liberal norm or a provocation. For this chant, it depends on if you ask the question in earnest or rhetorically/sarcastically. It also depends on who listens to the chant: is this an attempt at dialogue with the cops? In this case, the intention was as confused as the organizing, which had hundreds of antifascists milling around as fascists made speeches for hours, the two groups separated by a line of riot police.

It was a sunny day in November, but at least some people realized nice weather was no excuse to stand around, acting as unwilling substitutes for the fascists' missing audience. For

one blissful moment, cans of soda rained down on the police. But then, someone in the crowd threw their body in between the police and the soda cans like an umbrella, waving their arms and shouting “We are not here for the police! we are here for the fascists!” It was as if a manifestation of the chant had been accidentally conjured by the crowd, a fully personified liberal chant, aching to dialogue with the cops and remind everyone of their duty to protect us.

Flash forward over two years later and this confusion persists. It’s not necessarily that people are confused about the police (tout le monde déteste la police, non?). It would be difficult to believe that suddenly everyone adopted liberal attitudes. It’s true that many new people took to the streets when Trump was elected, but even these new faces all recognize the police as the enemies of Mike Brown, Eric Garner, etc. Our memories are not so short that we could replace the main enemy with the fash and forget the police entirely. It is more likely that the focus just narrowed: in their attempt to see the Nazis on the other side of the police line, their vision telescoped right past the police, and the foreground became blurry—like hyperopia.

This explains how even the “old heads” can show up to an antifascist demonstration unprepared to confront the police. Maybe even especially the old heads – those who reminisce about kicking the Nazi skins out of the punk shows. These are the people who when asked if it’s “okay to punch a Nazi” will (admirably) respond, “as long as you keep your thumb tucked under your knuckles and your wrist straight.” Timeless advice, sure, but only useful if you have a shot at someone that isn’t hiding behind a line of riot shields.

The last few antifascist demonstrations in Philly have faced down many more cops than fascists. Sometimes, the police have outnumbered the fascists and antifascists combined. Even when they are outnumbered by antifascists, the police have come better prepared with gear, plans, and training. The antifascists seem prepared to confront the fascists, but at a loss when facing the police. As a result, their goal remains the same—to circumvent the police to make it to the fascists. This is the strategy despite the problem that the fascists are often a handful of Blue Lives Matter demonstrators nestled in a crowd of police—under these circumstances, shouldn’t we just count the police as part of the Blue Lives Matter demonstration?

I do not have the space or desire to suggest an elaborate strategy here. I am simply pointing out that any strategizing should begin with this observation: there is no clear distinction between the fascists and police; any antifascist demonstration is an anti-police demonstration. In the Harrisburg scenario described above, it might have made sense to map out the area in order to confront the Nazis somewhere on their way to or from the event, when the police weren’t there, rather than getting stuck listening to their speeches. Some people already do this (and, to some extent, did this in Harrisburg)—what might be less obvious, even counterintuitive, are strategies that don’t focus on confronting the Nazis. We could take the streets in unexpected directions, even away from where police and fash are amassing. It might seem like you are going to lose sight of the enemy altogether, but you will find, I am sure, the police following closely behind you. The police are rarely defeated by a head-on attack (regardless of what gets disproportionately

included in riot porn). We can instead build on what we’ve learned in other kinds of demonstrations: keep moving, pick your battles, confuse and disorient the police into exhaustion. This kind of disruption indirectly hurts the fash, too, by costing cities that are friendly to Nazis (as Berkeley learned with Milo) and weakening their beloved social order. Maybe this is all already obvious to everyone but, if so, we should stop treating the police as an obstacle rather than an enemy.

We do not ask the cops who do they protect; we do not talk to the police at all. If you hear a comrade ask “who do you protect?”, act like they know better than to talk to the police and answer the question for them. Remind them that we are facing both the cops and the fash in the streets. Who do you protect? The answer is always neither. ★

KRASNER NEVER ABOLITIONIST, cont.

also convicted of murdering a police officer is able to use the courts to leave prison, certainly others will find ways to do the same. Regardless of whether Abu Jamal is innocent or guilty in the eyes of the law, those who purport to want the abolition of prisons and/or policing can easily understand that setting a precedent of leniency around crimes that directly interrupt the functioning of prisons (escape, contraband, parole violations, assault on guards or officers, etc) would be a benefit. Krasner and the Fraternal Order of Police also understand this and they understand that it would undermine the system that supports them.

Certainly Krasner has taken action to clear house and reform the justice system, but, as he has said, his office’s top priority remains justice, not abolition or liberation. Krasner is in a position to throw a wrench into the gears of the justice system, to interrupt policing and imprisonment in Philadelphia. Krasner could indiscriminately dismiss cases, defund services that aid police, and decriminalize as many crimes as possible until he gets charged with misconduct. Krasner could trash his office, fire his entire staff, and leave the city. Krasner could call meeting after meeting with top police and prison officials and never show up.

Those who want to be rid of prisons or policing should not be surprised that an elected politician is not anti-system. Relying on a lackey of justice to abolish the backbone of the justice system is a stretch. Even more so when he has billed himself as a progressive and reformist, not an abolitionist. ★



AMAZON, continued

ers has now resulted in some combination of the two at 23rd and South Streets. Amazon tractor trailers litter the highways, smaller delivery vehicles scurry about the city, their “treasure truck” continues to circulate, and their ever-increasing employees plod through the grocery aisles, face in phone, shopping for and delivering to those too wealthy to bother acquiring their own sustenance – often in stores that Amazon itself owns. And now their popular Ring brand video doorbells are being equipped with facial recognition software and providing information directly to police.

Philly-based anti-capitalist art collective “amazon_crime” sums up a report from *The Intercept* as such:

‘Amazon’s list of technologies marketed to police and ICE includes their doorbell camera company, Ring. Law enforcement, including Philadelphia’s PD, have partnered with Amazon’s Ring to have access to their data. Philly’s Sergeant John Massi thanked Ring for being a “supportive partner in the fight against crime.”

‘In November, Amazon submitted a patent application to combine Ring with facial recognition technology so it scans anyone walking by a home in real-time, cross-references facial images with a database of “suspicious” people compiled by police and homeowners, and feeds that information to police.’

While developments in facial recognition are quickly advancing, there are usually quite a lot of circumstances that must line up for it to fully function. Recent reports that crime prosecution rates remain low (e.g. only around 25% of armed robberies in Philly) credit, in part, citizens not participating in the identification of suspects that are photographed or video taped. Still, the full Intercept report does mention that the Ring collaboration with police has already contributed to an arrest here in Philadelphia.

Of course, Amazon is not alone in these endeavors either. It is no secret that Facebook has long been using and improving on facial recognition software, in addition to its exhaustive transgressions of user privacy, but new reports that Twitter has been storing “deleted” messages further confirms what we should already suspect of these platforms. It has also been suggested that the viral “ten year challenge,” which encouraged participants to post old and new photos of themselves side-by-side on the social media platform of their choice, was actually a perfect tool for improving such software. Google recently revealed that it had hidden a built-in mic in its Nest Secure device, reminiscent of Amazon’s Alexa device secretly recording audio in homes. The very existence of smart phones has outfitted much of the populace with a portable wire-tap, complete with tracking software and camera. And speaking again of cameras, the Philadelphia Parking Authority has begun to mount cameras on its vehicles, much like the police department has, but these are positioned to record license plates of cars they pass, regard-

less of the angle the car is parked at. This is in addition to the gross proliferation of cameras on street corners, businesses, and homes, which already have the potential to share recordings directly with police.

It would not be a massive exaggeration to suggest that every camera is a cop, as are many other devices. Technological progress has continued to decrease the cost of many electronic devices, which can benefit us and our causes at times, but more often proves a detriment to any cause for freedom.

This techno-invasion is certainly tied to gentrification, which one astute observer suggested can only be combated with “crime and arson.” But again, the cheapness of devices – and the inherent imposition of their necessity to function in society, which accompanies progress – means a much broader proliferation.

Additionally, the mass exodus of white people to the suburbs seems to have begun a broad reversal, as seemingly every major city in this country (and elsewhere) is witnessing a rising tide of gentrification.

This all begins to call into question the impact of the occasional camera removal/destruction game known as Camover on that broad proliferation of Amazon brand monitoring devices, in addition to other isolated tactics on the crashing waves of mediocrity and repression gentrification brings with it. Whether that means more coordinated campaigns against institutions and companies like Amazon, more concerted efforts leveraged against the very operation of the city and the safety of its wealthier populace, or a larger exodus to rural spaces, to name a few possibilities, remains to be seen. ★

REVIEW: GELDERLOOS’ “DIAGNOSTIC OF THE FUTURE”

“Diagnostic of the Future,” published by CrimethInc in the fall of 2018, is Peter Gelderloos’ latest extensive piece of writing. A lot has changed since *How Nonviolence Protects the State*, the 2005 historical analysis of social struggles that made Gelderloos a significant anarchist author and persuaded innumerable young middle-class Americans that breaking windows is a great idea after all. This time, Gelderloos projects his analysis into the future in an ambitious attempt to predict how capitalism and the state might restructure their way out of their present crisis, and what this implies for anarchist intervention in this moment.

“Diagnostic of the Future” will disappoint some because the essay doesn’t actually deliver the conclusive diagnosis it sets us up to expect. Nor does it tell us what to do about what may or may not happen in the future. But predicting the future is not really the essay’s goal, nor are its predictions what’s significant about this piece of writing.

Much of Gelderloos’s analytic strength across his writings lies in reintroducing a longterm historical perspective into whatever narrow, culturally amnesic assumptions predominate in the radical milieu of the moment. “Diagnostic” shows

a more recent influence by materialist analysis of political economy that makes its sophisticated understanding of the present moment — and its uncompromising conclusions about how anarchists should approach it — possible. This is more than can be said for most U.S. anarchists today, who seem more and more into posting about their favorite politicians on social media than actually doing away with governance.

Gelderloos understands the economy as a global system in constant need of exponential expansion into new markets, a need that frequently creates a state of crisis until capitalism figures out how to restructure itself, and whose present crisis is uniquely significant in that capital seems to have nowhere new and adequately huge enough to go next. One of Gelderloos's essay's strengths is its ability to articulate the insight that 1) we are currently witnessing an unprecedented level of global uncertainty; 2) given capitalism's history, we can assume that capital is currently trying to restructure itself in some new fashion in order to avoid collapse; and 3) there is therefore an urgent need for us to intervene now in this moment — in ways that hurt, rather than help, whatever path capitalism may end up taking towards its recovery.

To this end, Gelderloos's analysis dismisses the notion of a fast-approaching fascist future that has dominated the radical and liberal imagination alike in the U.S. since President Trump's election. This part is really worth reading and is where Gelderloos's historical approach is strongest. Democracy, especially in a settler state like the U.S., has always been much more effective than fascism in furthering white supremacy and capitalism. A two-party system, the author notes, has been essential for recuperating dissent and institutionalizing political change. Those who warn of the dangers of falling into fascism, which would involve consolidating the government into a one-party system, "implicitly identify the victory of the second party, the Democrats, as banishing the threat, a victory for antifascism. That lays the groundwork for a democratic renewal."

Capitalism and democracy are presently struggling with a very real crisis of legitimacy, which anarchists can either encourage by spreading and modeling our own ideas for what else is possible, or can help defuse by mobilizing fear of Trump's authoritarianism into electoral participation and leftist organizing. Time and time again, Gelderloos shows, radical movements that could have threatened the entire politico-economic order have been defused by power through a particular set of tactics, including participation in the system that leads to a renewal of the state's legitimacy. As Gelderloos writes, "We have been defeated by the same model so many times, we should get an outline of it tattooed on our foreheads so we see it whenever we look in the mirror."

At a group discussion of the piece at the A-Space in January, we collectively puzzled over one particular line, in the short section entitled "And the Anarchists?" that ends the essay: "The skill that may be most important, and that seems to be most lacking, is the capacity to turn survival into a communal concern." Many anarchists secretly still like being told

what to do, especially when confronted with the reality that this essay describes, and we would have liked more detail about what this skill would look like.

Here in Philly, survival projects tend to be so detached from antagonistic struggle against domination — in fact, they are usually pitted against each other — that most anarchists have chosen to concentrate on one or the other. Creating survival networks for ourselves and other insurgents, with which we can move towards self-sustenance while we attempt to destroy the status quo, is an ambitious project, but still one worth considering.

Peter Gelderloos is writing from Spain. This is important to note because, although anarchists have failed all over the world, it is probably easier to still imagine a transformative future influenced by anarchist intervention from the vantage point of Catalonia. Despite the current state of recuperation and pacification that Gelderloos has written about elsewhere, anti-authoritarianism has been ingrained in the rural and urban populations alike in Catalonia for centuries. Anarchists are so weak in the U.S. that it would be ridiculous to assume that we have much influence on any insurrection, let alone the one that ends the capitalist colonial nation-state. This has been obvious during the outbreaks of struggle against policing and prisons as well as colonial resource extraction here over the past five years.

In Philadelphia, at least among those of us who attended this discussion of the future at the A-Space, capitalism and the state's recovery from crisis seems like much less of a sure thing. Most of us, informed by texts like *Desert*, tend to doubt that capitalism will be able to quickly restructure itself in such a way that staves off the ecological collapse that is rapidly accelerating all around us. Will the politico-economic system pull itself together and become an eco-engineered, democratic socialist, totally managed hellscape? Or will we have to bug out with our gun collections to compete for the last remaining fresh water within the next 20 years? Either way, we will not be voting for Bernie in 2020.



"I have not spoken of anarchists in the preceding considerations because we are losing our ability to manifest as a social force in the changing circumstances. We have not succeeded in resisting technological convenience, overcoming the various addictions capitalism instills in us, abandoning the puritan habits that pass for politics, spreading revolutionary imaginaries, or communalizing daily life. Our ability to riot was enough to change the social discourse and open a few new possibilities for social movements over the last two decades. If the system does not repair itself quickly, however, our combative skills may become insufficient and invisible beside the far greater conflicts that will emerge. The skill that may be most important, and that seems to be most lacking, is the capacity to turn survival into a communal concern. Sadly, most people seem to be falling out the other side of individualism into the most extreme forms of alienation."
— Peter Gelderloos ★

REPORTBACK: YIDDISH ANARCHISM, NEW SCHOLARSHIP ON A FORGOTTEN TRADITION

The Yiddish Anarchist conference took place on J20 in NYC at the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research. The Yivo has been around since 1925, surviving the Holocaust before arriving here from Poland. Most of its staff was killed at that time, but a smuggling operation allowed it to be one of the only organizations of its kind to escape and endure.

The event pamphlet read, “Yiddish-speaking Jewish anarchists were one of the pillars of the U.S. anarchist movement before World War Two. This largely immigrant radical milieu was centered in NYC and opposed capitalism, the state, and organized religion. Yiddish-speaking anarchists built militant unions, anarchist newspapers and other organizations to further their cause. Many famous anarchists were linked to this movement, including Johann Most, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and Rudolf Rocker. Yiddish-speaking anarchists played a pivotal role in unions like the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU), while the Yiddish anarchist newspaper the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* was the largest and longest lasting U.S. anarchist publication and formed a significant part of the Yiddish cultural landscape.”

Panelists recalled people, organizations and roles that anarchists had during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Relaying that Yiddish speaking immigrant anarchists (along with Italian, Russian, Spanish and German) carried the tradition of anarchism into the 20th century. The event had three sections:

1. “Place, Protest, and Poetry: Foundations of Yiddish Anarchism”
2. “Against Tsar and Commissar: Russian Revolutions and Yiddish Anarchism”
3. “Language, Identity, and Culture: Transformations of Yiddish Anarchism”

On the first panel, Kenyon Zimmer (author of *Immigrants Against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America*) described how Yiddish speaking communities found each other. As anarchists, being Jewish wasn’t a prerequisite to being part of their community, as many were anti-religious. Instead, the community was bonded through language, culture, and a common enemy in antisemitism.

Affinity through a common enemy in antisemitism (and oppression) are pillars in contemporary radical left (and post-left) circles, particularly apparent in the new wave of Antifa. Coupled with the perception that Yiddish speaking immigrants were a “stateless and flagless people”, the ideological foundation was already congruent with that of anarchism. Emma Goldman’s writing of *A Woman Without a Country* was a shared sentiment, at least in title, as the Jewish diaspora continued.

Tom Goyens (*Storm in My Heart: Memories from the Widow of Johann Most* [AK Press]) presented on NYC’s German and Yiddish anarchists 1880-1906. “Both groups shared an affinity for militant atheism, and both celebrated their respective languages”. He also mentioned the anarchist tradition of “fiery oratory”, a form of soap boxing, was “enough to convert most to revolutionary anarchism”. He told a story of when German

speaking anarchists would march to Yiddish speaking neighborhoods to pick up their comrades, before marching together for labor strikes and other demonstrations.

Mark Grueter discussed the major role that Jewish anarchists played in leading a Russian-speaking anarchist movement to the US. The Union of Russian Workers was one anarchist federation of several thousand members organized primarily by Jews of eastern Europe. Yiddish speaking anarchists, with the IWW and other unions, helped lead a national strike movement in 1910. Many anarchist Russian immigrants had participated in the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, respectively.

Immigrant anarchists became more prosecuted and turned away in the US through the 1903 Anarchist Exclusion Act and The New York Criminal Anarchy Act of 1902. Later, the 1917 Immigration Act would again explicitly ban anarchists from US entry. The Yivo was hosting an exhibit titled “The Door Slams Shut,” which displayed political cartoons about the hatred and American reaction against Jews immigrating to the US. “100 years later, the players have changed. But the issues have remained remarkably similar.”

There were over 20 Yiddish-language anarchist papers during this time, including *Vos Viln Di Anarkhistn* (*What do anarchists want?*), *Di Fraye Gezelshaft* (*Free Society*), *Di Anarkhye* (*The Anarchy*, some of whose members, including Avrom Grossman and Boris Engelson, were executed by the Russian authorities), *Anarkhist* (*Anarchist*; published in Philadelphia by “the Group of Anarchist-Communists”), and *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* (*Free Voice of Labor*).

It was unmentioned on the panel, but Philadelphia had a significant influx of Yiddish speaking Jews from Russia during that period. This explains why at least one Yiddish-language anarchist newspaper was based here. Voltairine De Cleyre was said to have taught English to the Yiddish-speaking anarchists in Philadelphia, while they taught her Yiddish. Emma Goldman had spent significant time here as well. Like those who immigrated to NYC, many had escaped pogroms and persecution to establish Yiddish-speaking communities in North and South Philly.

While introducing *Forty Years in the Struggle: The Memoirs of a Jewish Anarchist*, Robert P. Helms mentions that Mount Sinai hospital (which was located at 4th and Reed, until it was recently demolished as capitalists gentrify the neighborhood with more ugly condos) was founded by a group of anarchist physicians in 1905. Its purpose was to serve the local Jewish factory workers in need of free or cheap healthcare. Another book, *The Jewish Anarchist Movement in America: A Historical Overview and Personal Reminiscences* by Joseph Cohen was published in Philadelphia by the Radical Library (Workers’ Circle Branch 273) in 1945. The chapter “My First Years in Philadelphia” sheds light on the Yiddish-speaking radicals who formed cooperative businesses near South street in the early 1900s. I’m only aware of this next book because my grandmother lived on Marshall Street in North Philly at this time. It’s called *Voices from Marshall Street: Jewish Life in a Philadelphia Neighborhood 1920-1960*. Though not anarchist in focus, it narrates working class characters in the community that these immigrants formed.

The keynote speaker was Anatole Dolgoff, the son of two lifelong anarchists from this era. Sam and Esther Dolgoff were active in publications and organizations such as the IWW, the Free Society, Vanguard, the Spanish Civil War, The Libertarian League, Fraye Arbeter Shtime, and the Libertarian Book Club. His talk was titled “Disobedient Jews,” which uncovered historical characters and their significance in the anarchist movement. Dolgoff spoke from memory of his childhood and reminded us that he was neither a historian or academic.

Dolgoff shared a story about a Russian Jew, Abraham Robbinowitz, a college-educated man who left NYC to support the IWW on the opposite side of the country. Dolgoff said he felt a relation between himself and Robbinowitz, though they had never met. Dolgoff shared how Robbinowitz was killed by police during the massacre of Everett in 1916. The IWW reported, “[He] was one who was born of a race without a flag, a race oppressed by the intolerance and superstition of the ages, and died fighting for the brotherhood of man.”

Notes on remembrance for today’s movements:

There are a few points to share as they relate to modern social movements and how I see them in relation to the Philadelphia’s far left and post-left scenes.

1. For or against the state: anarchism, communism, socialism

It seems that similarities have brought these political frameworks closer in today’s society, as the grudges of capitalism become more desperate to maintain state and corporate power under Trump’s presidency and the rising economic/labor precarity that is the “gig economy.” However, with the exception of anarcho-communism, we cannot forget what happens when communists get state power. Recalled during this conference was how the Bolsheviks and other communist state agents crushed anarchists.

This is a piece of history that was detrimental to many Yiddish-speaking anarchists and to Yiddish culture. Fanya Baron was one named Russian anarchist who was killed in 1921 by knights of the communist state after being imprisoned without charges along with her comrades. Additionally, according to one speaker, some early unsolved murders of US anarchists were rumored to be committed by communists rather than state agents. Remember that the next time a comrade jokes about sending anarchists to gulag.

2. Revitalization of the Philly IWW Local 8

The Philadelphia IWW Local 8 was brought up as one of the most ethnically diverse and aggressive chapters in the country since 1905. Many of the Yiddish-speaking immigrant anarchists were active in labor organizing and the IWW was brought up by nearly every panelist. The rebirth of this organization in the last two years should be supported, as it has already taken steps towards becoming a watershed of radical organizing potential.

3. Actions and Jewish heritage

During the Q&A session, someone brought up the importance of “flagging” or being visibly of Jewish heritage at an action; an example showed one banner with both Yiddish and English

text. I liked this example because it doesn’t imply religiosity in the same way that other signifiers of Judaic descent might. Revealing one’s Jewish heritage in the streets can shift the narrative of who we are fighting for and why.

Often, Jews hold the collective memory of surviving ghettos, immigration enforcement, pogroms, genocide and diaspora. Stories and intergenerational trauma can inspire children of the Jewish diaspora to fight back rather than be complicit in white supremacy and assimilation.

An act of solidarity in an action can be meaningful in an era of border walls and muslim bans, as our ancestors were also scapegoated, banned, and turned away at the border while seeking asylum. Intentionality about what space we do take up as white and white-passing people (in the case of Ashkenazi Jews) in a society that marginalizes/fetishizes/targets black and brown bodies is important. We should approach our common enemy with intersectionality and solidarity as our sharpest weapons.

This conference was the first of its kind. It was welcomed with a significant reception of interest and attendance. As a person who is both a lifelong anarchist and a descendant of Yiddish-speaking Russian Jews who escaped for Poland and then to the US in the 1910s, this conference felt personally validating. I hope these themes can be further built upon as Jewish descendants search for an identity that isn’t complicit with white supremacy, capitalism, or supportive of a literal ethnostate. As atheistic anarchists, I hope this revitalized history can assist in refining our own identities, affinities, and strategies against oppression on new terrain.

Unfortunately, state zionism has disgraced much of what our radical traditions have stood for. We cannot let the radical tradition of our heritage be ignored or suppressed, as it is valuable for those who are looking to find themselves in a place other than lukewarm leftist zionism. This is obviously a larger conversation on identity and strategy that I hope to see folks continue to explore, so that we can sharpen our methods of attacking state repression, police violence and the exploitation of life under capitalism. ★

WORLD NEWS

COMMUNIQUE FROM ANARCHIST PRISONER JUAN FLORES RIQUELME

From Santiago, Chile, via Act For Freedom

*“I want to address my goal.
I’m still walking.*

*I’m going to get ahead of those that remain undecided and
those that linger.*

May my way be their destruction.”

- Friedrich Nietzsche

Silent, peaceful, sensible and conformist: they want us that way!!! Spectators of their violence and misery, they indoctrinate us through their means of “communication,” wanting us to become a mindless mass without ideas. Capitalism is a plague that infects everything in its path, independent of the place where it incubates. Without a doubt, we can perceive its violence, its

armed repression and open assassinations. The citizenry is outraged, and the more it is outraged the more innocent they feel ...

Those small foci of insurgency in an unequal way FACE capitalist violence, but the citizenry is outraged and the more they get angry, the more they feel they are voting for those who offer them the so-called “social peace”... I wonder. If we are not able to organize our anger, with what face will we tell our loved ones to fight for their ideas?

I will not live as the law tells me. I will advance on that path that other unruly people have already covered... that of action! Together with my comrades, together with my loved ones and those who give themselves faithfully and constant to the fight against the prevailing ideology, because I will not live in the shadows of resignation and indifference, I will experience the intensity of a life fully lived... authentic and free life... life without restrictions. I will boldly defend the possibility of developing myself without obeying.

I consider it essential that every individual that has not yet been subjugated by power manifests their anger by advancing along the path of action, that they come together, realizing with their peers an intensification of conflict, an intensification of action! To act autonomously without waiting for conditions, steps, or processes.

Let's give life to something, something strong that inflames and destroys everything that is at the service of power and its bourgeoisie... something that avenges and removes the dominant face with all our rage, seeking continuity, that the roar of chaos destroys the eardrums of all the powerful... we break his laws and we put an end to centuries of silence!!!

WE ATTACK AND DESTROY THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR REPRESSION AND EXPLOITATION!!! WE ATTACK AND DESTROY YOUR JAILS, POLICE STATIONS AND COURTS!!!

Let's not waste time discussing how and when to act; every moment is propitious; we are enemies of the order and we light up with flames of hate the miserable bourgeois streets... so that our actions manage to destabilize their “social peace,” their tranquility, their interests.

My fraternal greetings to prisoners of war all over the world, I know that behind the situation of each one, a thirsty and indomitable heart is beating.

To the comrades of the Conspiracy of the Cells of Fire and Revolutionary Struggle, kidnapped in the jails of Korydallos, Greece. To Marcelo Villarreal, Juan Aliste and Joaquín García, kidnapped in different sections of the high security prison. Alejandro Centoncio, captive in the former penitentiary. To the comrade Tamara Sol, captive in the prison of Valdivia.

Rebellious and insubordinate memory for all those brothers and sisters who gave their lives in this war against domination: Mauricio Morales, Sebastián Oversluij, Zoe and Lambros Fountas...

*Juan Alexis Flores Riquelme,
Maximum security section,
High security prison*

Explosive attack on a Ford car showroom by the ELF (Mexico) via 325

Communique received on 02/01/2019:

It's obvious that techno-industrial progress is advancing and with it the impact on nature is becoming stronger and more irreversible...

We won't take a reformist and conformist attitude in the face of this situation, now less than ever as the 'ecologist' struggle has been absorbed by governmental institutions and platform groups, which prepared the ground for a new form of irrational consumerism, depicted as 'ecological', 'green'... (sic) so as to allow companies to make profits at the cost of the destruction of the planet and all the beings who inhabit it... as hypocritical happiness and tranquillity dominated the end of the year festivities, we preferred to prepare and carry out an attack with an explosive device at dawn on 1st January, against a Ford Gimsa car showroom situated in Mexico-Texcoco Carretera in Reyes a la Paz, which caused damage to the façade and to some cars that were parked there... with this action we express solidarity with the comrades on the run in this territory under surveillance and with the Argentinian comrades who have been subjected to a wave of repression following an explosion; this attack is also part of a coordination of attacks in several areas of the country and responds to a call for agitation and attack.

Earth Liberation Front – Anti-Civilization Cell

Cancún, México: Explosive Attack Against Quintana Roo State Legislature Building by Attack Cells Against the Devastation of the Earth via 325

01.12.18: In response to the call for agitation against the G20 we placed an explosive device outside the building of the 15th Legislature of the State of Quintana Roo located in Cancún to demonstrate that solidarity is not just a paraphrase of slogans. With this attack we also join the action initiated by the compas detained in Argentina who have become a product of the media spectacle that they want to accustom to us to, know that their disgusting tourist paradise will not prevent us from throwing ourselves into action.

Against the G20 and in solidarity with the Argentinian prisoners

Total Liberation

Attack Cells Against the Devastation of the Earth★



from "FACELESS"

The start of mass destruction
Begins and ends
In restaurant bathrooms
That some people use
And other people clean
"you telling me there's a rag in the sky?"
-waiting for you. yes-

we've written a scene
we've set a stage

We should have fit in. warehouse jobs are for communists. But now more corridor and hallway
have walked into our lives. Now the whistling is less playful and the barbed wire is overcrowded
too.

My dear, if it is not a city, it is a prison.
If it has a prison, it is a prison. Not a city.

When a courtyard talks on behalf of military issue,
all walks take place outside of the body.

Dear life to your left
A medieval painting to your right

None of this makes an impression

Crop people living in thin air
You got five minutes
to learn how to see
through this breeze

When a mask goes sideways,
Barbed wire becomes the floor
Barbed wire becomes the roof
Forty feet into the sky
becomes out of bounds

When a mask breaks in half,
mind which way the eyes go.

They killed the world for the sake of giving everyone the same backstory

Tongo Eisen-Martin

